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ABSTRACT

Faith communities can play an important role in communities by encouraging families to be involved in their children's learning and by forming partnerships that enhance the potential for family and community involvement in children's education. To support these efforts, this publication provides faith community leaders and members with ideas, tips, examples, and resources for getting involved in education. The first section, "Examples from the Field," highlights some examples of the leadership role that national religious organizations have provided to their local faith communities, as well as programs that local faith communities have established in support of schools and children's learning. The second section, "Faith Communities Support for Children's Learning," discusses ways that faith communities can support children's learning, including appropriate roles for faith communities, building partnerships, action areas that promote family and community involvement in children's learning, and structured activities for a faith community. The third section, "Priority Education Issues," discusses priority areas identified by the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, including after-school learning, the America Reads Challenge, and safe and drug-free schools efforts. The fourth section, "Resources and References," provides a number of resources to help a faith community support children's learning, including Statement of Principles on Religious Expression in Public Schools, The Equal Access Act, and a list of organizations that can answer questions about religious expression in public schools. (LPP)

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Faith Communities Joining with Local Communities to Support Children's Learning: Good Ideas

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U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

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Faith Communities Joining with Local Communities to Support Children's Learning: Good Ideas

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Introduction

Faith communities play a vital role in reaching out and connecting to families and children. As faith communities fulfill this role, they often become involved in and supportive of education issues of importance in their local community. Across the nation, there are excellent examples of the positive impact that faith communities have had in encouraging and enabling families to be involved in their children's learning. Some of these communities use U.S. Department of Education resources and programs, which are described later in this book. Many form partnerships involving people from places other than faith communities and schools—such as community groups, businesses, families, and education organizations. These partnerships enhance the potential for family and community involvement in children's education.

To support these efforts, this publication provides faith community leaders and members with ideas, tips, examples, and resources for getting involved in education. From examples of what's happening in the field, to a focus on the involvement of faith communities in children's learning to a description of the most pressing education issues, this book offers a number of good ideas to help faith communities be successful in their mission to help children learn. The book ends with a collection of resources and references to further help you in your work.

You can make a difference for children and families in your community. We hope you will share your own successful ideas with us.

Examples from the Field

Faith communities play an important and vibrant role in communities across the United States. One of the roles they play is to inspire their membership to support children and families in obtaining a world-class education. Many faith communities recognize their role and influence, but often need assistance with focus, activities, funding, and know-how. In this chapter are highlighted some examples of the leadership role national religious organizations have provided to their local faith communities, as well as programs that local faith communities have established in support of schools and children's learning.

Alexandria (VA) Tutoring Consortium—This partnership between the Alexandria Faith Community and the Alexandria Public Elementary Schools sets as its goal to tutor young children in reading through one-on-one discussion. A congregation-based coordinator recruits tutors and assists with scheduling; a school-based coordinator acts as the building point-of-contact. Working with the school's volunteer coordinator, the classroom teacher identifies and assists with scheduling children who need tutoring. Tutoring materials are selected by the public schools, which also provide training for the volunteer tutors. The tutor and student meet three times per week for 30 minutes each time. The qualifications for tutors are a love of reading and a love of children.

Chicago Public Schools Interfaith Community Partnership—This multicultural interfaith group of religious leaders, brought together by Superintendent Paul Vallis, forms a network for the purpose of assisting local schools in addressing crisis in and around the schools, student discipline problems, truancy and low attendance rates, school safety concerns, student and staff attitudes, and self-esteem issues. The partnership provides crisis intervention, workshops for parents, curriculum development in the areas of character education and values, a diversity calendar, expansion of local school partnerships, sponsorship of radio and TV interviews with public school staff to promote Chicago Public School initiatives, and coordination for establishing a crisis support fund.

National Council of Churches—Each year, materials related to public education and supporting teachers are made available to member denominations and congregations of the National Council of Churches. This resource has many components. It highlights education initiatives of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, urges local churches to participate in projects such as the America Reads Challenge (see p. 34) and *America Goes Back to School* (see p. 21), and contains a listing of publication resources available to local faith communities.

National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Center for the Child—In 1995, NCJW launched "Parents as School Partners" with four activities: focus groups with parents, teachers, and principals to hear what parent involvement means to them and what they need to make school-parent partnerships work; surveys of school district superintendents regarding parent involvement policies and programs; a critical review of the research on parent involvement; and a compilation of promising school-based programs for enhancing parent involvement. The results are contained in a kit that is being disseminated to school districts, teachers, parents, and advocates of parent involvement in order to apply the findings around the country.

Presbyterian Church (USA)—The Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, Task Force on the Church and Education, of the Presbyterian Church (USA), published *Presbyterian Churches Supporting Public Education: A Workbook for Improving Quality and Equality in our Public Schools*. Additionally, the Presbyterian Church designated 1998 as the "Year with Education," when activities at presbyteries across the country focused on support for public education.

Seventh Day Adventists—The General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists pledged 3,000 reading tutors in response to the America Reads Challenge. The reading tutors are being recruited through work with youth organizations on the high school and university levels. This is part of the Conference's overall plan to meet its commitment given at the Presidents' Summit.

Shiloh Baptist Church (Washington, DC)—Shiloh/Seaton Elementary School Partnership creates mutual support activities for the children served by the school and church. The partnership has established a reading tutorial program for children attending Seaton, staffed by volunteers from Shiloh.

Women's League for Conservative Judaism—The Women's League has local chapters throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Each local chapter was encouraged to begin a READ*WRITE*NOW! Summer Reading Program (see p. 37) with materials from the U.S. Department of Education to serve its community and to affiliate with the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy. Because some chapters experienced initial success with the program, more chapters have adopted it and others plan to continue it each summer.

Faith Communities' Support for Children's Learning

How did these faith communities—and thousands more like them around the country—get started in supporting schools and local education efforts? What is the appropriate role of faith communities in local education efforts and what are the boundaries for volunteers? How can faith communities build partnerships within their local community to ensure effectiveness and target resources? Before answering these questions, let's look at why family involvement is so important that it calls for a national effort to join together in building family-school-community partnerships.

Did you know that parents and family members are critically important to a child's education?

- Seventy-two percent of children, ages 10-13, said they would like to talk with their parents more about schoolwork. Almost half of older students, ages 14-17, agreed! *(National Commission on Children, Speaking of Kids: a National Survey of Children and Parents, 1991)*
- Roughly one-half of students get As when one or both parents are highly supportive of their child's education, regardless of whether the child is in a single or dual parent home. *(National Center for Education Statistics, Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools, 1997)*
- Three factors over which parents exercise authority—school attendance, presence of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching—account for nearly 90 percent of the difference in eighth-

grade math test scores across high-performing and low-performing states. *(National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1994).* In fact, 30 years of research has shown definitively that parents' involvement counts significantly toward a child's success, or failure, in school.

Appropriate Role for Faith Communities

What is the appropriate role for faith communities in public education and what are the boundaries for volunteers?

Faith communities can be of great support to the efforts of local schools and the families in the community. It is appropriate and encouraged for faith communities to take an active role in supporting children's learning as part of a partnership with public schools. However, it is not appropriate for members of faith communities to use their involvement in public schools as an occasion to endorse religious activity or doctrine or force participation in a religious activity.

Religious Expression in Public Schools (see p. 54) was distributed in August 1995 and again in June 1998 by Secretary of Education Richard Riley. In his cover letter, Secretary Riley emphasizes that these guidelines for religious expression in public schools reflect two basic and equally important obligations of the First Amendment.

> *First, schools may not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs*

solely because they are of a religious nature. Schools may not discriminate against private religious expression by students, but must instead give students the same right to engage in religious activity and discussion as they have to engage in other comparable activity...At the same time, schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity... [T]he right of religious expression in school does not include the right to have a 'captive audience' listen, or to compel other students to participate.

When members and leadership of faith communities volunteer in schools or volunteer to work with students and their families for an educational purpose in partnership with public schools, they should act with the same understanding of the First Amendment as do school officials. Any partnership activities should have a secular purpose, and volunteers in the partnership activities should respect the religious rights of students and the responsibilities of school officials to neither foster nor discourage religious belief or activity. In this light, the following are some guidelines for members and leaders of faith communities who engage in school and education activities in partnership with public schools:

- DON'T participate in student-led religious activities when in your capacity in the educational program, but DO acknowledge students from the educational program when you meet them in a religious context.

- DO stop student speech that constitutes harassment aimed at another student or group of students but DON'T infringe on the rights of students and their family members to speak about religion or to say a prayer or to read a Scripture, provided it is within the reasonable limits of rules for orderliness, talking, and congregating that are set for other speech and activities.
- DON'T prohibit or discourage speech or other activity simply because of its religious content or nature and DON'T pray with the students and families or encourage them to pray during your volunteer session with them.
- DO impart civic values and virtues and encourage positive character development but DON'T preach about your faith to the children and their families while conducting your educational activity.

Public schools, and the programs operated in partnership with them, can neither foster religion nor preclude it. Our public schools must treat religion with fairness and respect and vigorously protect religious expression as well as the freedom of conscience of all other students. In doing so, public school programs reaffirm the First Amendment and enrich the lives of their students.

Faith Communities—Building Partnerships for Action

How do faith communities get started in their efforts to support children's learning and family involvement in education? How can faith communities build partnerships to ensure effectiveness and target resources in the community?

To answer these questions, we can take a look at a process adapted from the business community, modified to reflect the culture, resources, and abilities of faith communities to lead and support community efforts. Templates to help you organize this process are in the resources and reference section of this publication.

Asking What You Can Offer

- Create or highlight a culture in your faith community that supports involvement in education—Does your faith community have a tradition in education, has a literacy program begun, or do you need to raise awareness about the scope of the issue within your community?
- Assess your resources—Evaluate your own organization's capacity for physical plant, volunteers, equipment, materials, transportation, and funds.

Choosing and Recruiting Partners. Understand that better education IS everybody's business—your religious organization or faith community could be the catalyst to help everyone become involved. The key to a successful, sustained community activity is to form partnerships in the community. The greater the number and diversity of people involved, the greater the chance of long-term success. Your partnership might start small—a partnership just within your faith community, with members who are valuable resources because they are also parents, teachers, employers, community leaders, or retired citizens, to name just a few categories of rich experiences. You may then want to expand your partnership to include other faith communities, local schools and school district staff, community groups, and businesses in your area. All of these human resources together will help you decide how to build the most effective partnership.

- Determine who your partners will be—With which schools and educational systems would you like to work? What other community groups are active and interested in helping children learn? What are the educational programs currently being offered in the community?
- Recruit and organize partners—Remember that the relationships you are building around education are partners, not outsiders coming in to "fix" a problem. View the school and other partners as equals who, together, can improve children's learning and the involvement of their families.

Setting Priorities and Goals. Forming a partnership is only part of the process. Once you have all the right people around the table the partnership must decide on its specific priorities and goals and begin to determine the

steps necessary in the local community to reach the goals. Differing community needs and circumstances will determine the timeline for this process. Setting a timeline and goal for initiating activities can be one of the first tasks of your partnership. Coordinating your timeline with the school year calendar is a key activity.

- Create a vision together—Be specific in your vision. Associate concrete actions with your statements. Working with school staff, identify priority areas.
- Reconcile the vision with partner goals, current activities of each partner organization, and resource capability—Now that your partnership has a vision, review the policies, programs, and activities of partner members and see how well they fit into the vision and how each partner can help achieve the goals.
- Set up a steering committee—Be sure it is someone's responsibility to coordinate and accomplish each activity and its component parts.
- Set and prioritize short- and long-term goals—Short-term goals can be for the next 4-6 months; long-term goals for the next year and beyond.
- Create a plan and form a team around priorities—Map out the operations needed to be successful, including outreach, networking, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Implement an action plan—Be sure to include timelines, but don't hesitate to revise them if, in practice, they become unrealistic.

Measuring Your Success. Don't stop with implementing your plan—be sure to evaluate it and use the results of your evaluation to measure your progress, inform your community, and plan for the next phase of your project.

- Measure and report progress—Nothing breeds success like success! Be sure to spread the word throughout your community, not only of the successes you've had, but of the challenges that lie ahead.
- Review the annual plan and plan for the future—Measure your progress and use this information to plan the next stage of your project.

Remember to consult the templates in the final chapter. They are designed to help you work through this process with your partners.

Action Areas That Promote Family and Community Involvement in Children's Learning

From national religious organizations to local faith communities, effective partnerships can be formed among people of faith and with organizations outside of the faith community to support schools and family involvement in education. Here are some action areas to consider as your partnership begins to brainstorm on how to reach the goals it has set for itself:

Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence. Prevention programs work best when parents, students, law enforcement officials, and communities join together to provide consistent messages and support comprehensive programs. Members of faith communities can partner with schools to provide

mentoring and afterschool programs to give children safe havens from violence and alternatives to drugs.

> Several years ago, racial unrest in the Jordon Park area of St. Petersburg, Florida, brought to the forefront one of the issues that many in the community knew already: their youth needed support and attention, particularly in the afterschool hours. A coalition, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA), which was formed 24 years ago, came together and formulated the Urban Fellowship Mentoring, Tutoring, and Enrichment Program. They began to pursue ways that they could make the afterschool hours safe and productive for their young people. The Urban Fellowship Program approached the Pinellas County Schools with their ideas and together they found other partners to make their dream a reality. The Urban Fellowship Program, Pinellas County Schools, Juvenile Welfare Board, the National Conference on Community and Justice, and the University of South Florida today are partners in a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant (see p. 32), operating the Johns Hopkins Community Learning Center, providing safe and beneficial afterschool and summer activities to middle school youth in Jordon Park.

Provide mentoring programs. Interested citizens—from employers to college students to members of faith communities to senior citizens—can participate in mentoring programs that provide emotional support and guidance to young people. Mentors can help with schoolwork, job skills development and career planning, and can help connect young people to the potential and importance of college and training beyond high school. The evening hours are a great time for mentors to meet with their students. Senior citizens and college students can even meet in the afternoon hours.

Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, DC, established a Family Life Center to strengthen and nurture families in the surrounding community, bringing them together for educational, cultural, and recreational activities. One of its educational programs is the Male and Female Youth Enhancement Project, designed to stimulate healthy lifestyles in African American youths ages 8-15 in the community by providing them positive role models, socialization activities, and educational enrichment.

Enlist community volunteers. Community and religious organizations can organize support for young people. Senior citizens in many communities are putting their experience and expertise to work on behalf of children. Volunteers can serve as tutors or teacher aides, work in the library, or help with afterschool activities. Sometimes the best help is for a faith community to add volunteers to an existing program.

The National Jewish Coalition for Literacy has pledged to recruit 100,000 volunteers over five years in response to the America Reads Challenge. In most instances, the Coalition is working with existing literacy programs to support ongoing efforts. In a few communities, the coalition has taken the initiative to start a new partnership. The Coalition's 27 affiliates include Boston, Hartford, Louisville, Atlanta, and Seattle.

Offer before- and afterschool, weekend, and summer learning activities. Community partnerships can make afterschool and summer learning activities available to young people through schools, cultural institutions, park districts, and other public and private agencies. Faith communities can either organize activities or partner with other community groups in on-going programs.

In Jackson, Tennessee, 10 churches have designed a tutoring program in cooperation with the local school system to serve children residing in public housing and other neighborhoods. Three nights a week, church buses provide transportation to church facilities where 250 volunteers work with 350 children, providing assistance in reading and math. Volunteers from the tutoring program also raise funds to purchase school supplies and then operate a school supply "store" that gives school supplies to students prior to the opening of school.

Support early childhood development and preschool programs. New scientific findings on brain development in very young children point to the importance of children's earliest experiences in helping them get off to a strong and healthy start. Community and religious organizations can help children start on the right path by supporting programs that work with young children and their parents, offering educationally based child care programs, and special activities for children and their parents.

The Sixth Episcopal District of the African-Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church (Georgia) launched an America Reads Challenge project with emphasis on rural areas. "Meeting Our Community in Their Community" launched a campaign to provide a home library for every family in several rural areas. The fourth Sunday of each month was declared "My New Books Sunday." The project culminated in a special learning and recreational event featuring storytelling, reading aloud, and a time for children to pick out their new books.

Moving National Efforts to the Local Level

Many national religious organizations are committed to being a part of improving the educational opportunities available to children in the local communities that are served by their houses of worship. Together, national

organizations, their local affiliates, schools, communities, and individuals can make a positive difference in family involvement in education and help children achieve high standards and improve schools. In today's world of expanding educational and technological opportunities, it is more important than ever to find effective and efficient ways to move national initiatives to the local, grassroots level, because that is where the real action—helping children learn—takes place!

As a national organization working with local affiliates, communities, and individuals, it is important to understand the mission, needs, resources, and capacity of local communities. While the easier question to answer is usually "What are the needs?", the harder question is "What can I do to meet these needs?". Here are some tips for national organizations to help local affiliates successfully carry out a national initiative in a community.

Getting Started. Work with local communities from the beginning of the project. Local communities must buy into and feel ownership of the program by determining their own needs and recognizing their own capacity to help.

Needs Assessment. Help local organizers or coordinators assess needs and identify assets within their community. Develop a survey questionnaire to assess needs or share assessment instruments used elsewhere. Help organizers to address demographics, cultural awareness and appreciation, and language barriers in their planning. Include communication tools (for example, all schools linked in a network), acknowledge existing networks, and recognize that many community leaders wear different "hats" (for example,

a business leader may also be a member of a faith community and a Scout leader).

Share Information. Share information about resources that exist outside of the community. Design a resource package for local organizers that includes examples of resources available from federal and state governments and from other communities that may have designed similar programs. Keep the size of the resource package manageable. This book represents one such resource you can use.

Guidance. Provide guidance on building local partnerships. Information should include getting the right players around the table, working with school systems, and sharing examples of how this has been done successfully. Additionally, the role of a local coordinator should be defined.

Goals. Specify the goals of the nationwide initiative. Clarify how the national initiative correlates to the goals of the local affiliates. Encourage local involvement in a national initiative (such as the U.S. Department of Education's *America Goes Back to School* initiative) in a way that makes sense—a way that will fit local affiliates' needs and match their capacities.

Results. Provide information to locals about what results should be measured and ideas on how to carry out an evaluation. Give examples or help create consistent and realistic evaluation tools, including anecdotal evidence, survey forms, and other reporting mechanisms. Encourage local organizers to include evaluation as part of the program from the beginning.

The Comprehensive Health Education Foundation published a book entitled *Renewing the Partnership: The Mainline Church in Support of Public Education*. This book serves as a resource to local faith communities about how to be appropriately involved in supporting education in their community. It calls for a partnership of religious leaders and educators working together to ensure the most effective quality education for all children. An update of this book is planned for fall 1999.

The United Methodist Church published *Education, The Gift of Hope*, and provided it to all UMC parishes to encourage their support for and involvement in public education and children's learning. The UMC followed up this publication with a parish study guide to help local churches establish partnerships with local schools, bring the education conversation to the entire community, and support families and life-long learning.

Structured Activities for Your Faith Community

Beginning your activities with a focus can help lead to success in your efforts, keep your partnership moving forward, and recruit others to join with you. Whether you are working on reading, safe schools, mentoring, college going, or early childhood, the following activities can give you the structure your partnership needs to kick off its involvement efforts and sustain its activities to support children's learning.

America Goes Back to School!

America Goes Back to School is an annual "call to action" for communities to have a role and a stake in improving education by getting involved and staying involved in their local schools. This initiative encourages parents, grandparents, community leaders, employers and employees, members of the arts community, faith communities, and every caring adult to show children how much they value education by celebrating the opening of school and helping them learn all year long. When families, communities, and schools work together—from kindergarten through college—schools work better and students learn more. Religious communities can play a vital role by helping to strengthen home-school connections.

To answer the *America Goes Back to School* call to action, faith communities can:

- Help make schools safer by conducting conflict resolution workshops that teach children how to settle disputes peacefully and respond when someone is bothering them. Work with students on an anti-violence campaign.

- Encourage family involvement in education by sponsoring "family math" or "family science" programs or events where members of your congregation, especially business leaders, engage in conversation about careers in

science and math with both students and their families. Targeting middle school students is especially important, because they will soon be making course selections and decisions that impact their ability to attend college or other postsecondary education.

- Help set a reading and literacy goal for your community—to read 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Reward children who meet this goal by sponsoring a special activity in your facility, conducting an awards ceremony for parents and children, or providing a new book with donations from the congregation as a reward for a job well done.

- Emphasize high standards by convening an assembly, discussion group, or afterschool program at which members of your community tell personal stories to students and their families about how "going the extra mile made a difference in my life." This will reinforce the benefits of having high standards that require discipline, extra effort, dedicated study, and persistence.

- Help in the drive to make sure technology is available to all students by being a neighborhood center that offers afterschool computer activities and also provides a safe haven for students. Open your center to parents and young adults in the evening for job-training and skills acquisition.

- Organize volunteers in the community who will help local middle and high school students learn about different college programs and the college application process. Help them fill out applications and financial aid forms

as well as provide information on scholarships. Collect donations to provide funding for college application fees.

A coalition of faith communities and education associations in Phoenix, Arizona, uses *America Goes Back to School* as a focal point each year to honor teachers—current and retired—for the work they do on behalf of children and youth. Teachers are honored at each participating religious community's worship service and then come together in a joint location for presentation of certificates, followed by refreshments, to honor their contributions.

Religion and Education Summit

The goal of a Religion and Education Summit is to bring together leadership representing both communities of faith and schools to discuss issues of concern to the community and to build partnerships that bring about the changes needed for the benefit of all children. Successful summits have been held in several areas of the country and have resulted in lasting partnerships that positively affect children and youth.

Lawrence, Massachusetts, was the site for a Religion and Education Summit that brought together faith and education leaders from throughout New England. Participants learned about the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the appropriate roles for faith communities in supporting education in their local communities. The afternoon was devoted to working together in statewide groups to design a plan of action for joint projects and activities. Each group pledged to continue meeting with each other to get their projects off the ground. As a result, projects in many New England communities were begun—tutoring and mentoring, afterschool, reading, and school safety—all benefiting children and youth.

A Religion and Education Summit held at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky, drew participants from across the state and from neighboring school districts in Ohio and Tennessee. This summit's goal was to bring together faith communities, educators, and institutions of higher education to encourage middle and high school students to work toward achieving high standards and make realistic plans for post-secondary education. Kentuckiana Metroversity, a coalition of colleges, universities, and seminaries in the greater Louisville area, is coordinating follow-up activities to keep alive the excitement generated at the summit.

The final section of this book contains a step-by-step guide to bringing together your community for a Religion and Education Summit.

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education was started in September 1994 by Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley to encourage and support families' involvement in children's learning to high standards. The Partnership is a growing grassroots organization of schools, employers, educators, families, religious groups, and community organizations who recognize their interdependent roles in supporting family and community involvement in children's learning and in improving schools and raising student achievement.

The Partnership's mission is:

- to increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home; and
- to use family-school-community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement.

Because family participation in children's learning is often influenced by work schedules and time constraints, it is crucial that businesses, community and religious organizations, and especially families and schools support parent and employee involvement in education. By taking into account all of these constraints on family time and staying child-focused, there is a much greater chance that the child will receive the support he or she needs. To encourage such support, the Department of Education administers the Partnership and offers resources, ideas, funding and conferences relevant to family involvement in education. Partners across the sectors—Employers for Learning, Community Organizations, Religious Groups, and Family-School Partnerships—commit to increasing family participation in children's learning through a variety of activities and efforts, some of which are: student- and family-friendly policies at the workplace, before- and afterschool programs, tutoring and mentoring initiatives, and donations of facilities and technologies.

The Religious Group sector of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education actively promotes family and community involvement in education. From national leadership activities to local tutoring, mentoring, and afterschool programs operated by faith communities, the Partnership's

Religious Community group has been making a difference in the lives of children and families.

As a member of the Partnership, you'll learn about new information, materials, and studies; be able to link up with other organizations working toward the same goals; and be a part of a national effort to encourage and enable families to be involved in their children's learning. Join now, and make a difference in the life of a child. A sign-on form is included in the final chapter of this publication.

Priority Education Issues

What are the activities in which your partnership will engage to help your community? Will you provide safe havens for the afterschool hours? Will your members be reading tutors? Will your partnership's emphasis be on college going for young men and women? Will you help make your local schools and neighborhoods safe and drug-free learning and living environments?

The activities for building partnerships outlined in the previous chapters will help you to work within your community to determine its priorities in education and family involvement. For the past several years, members of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education have been involved in many activities on the national, regional, state, and local levels. Because of these many successful activities, the Partnership has determined several priority areas that are supported through up-to-date materials, resources, and funding. These priority areas, detailed below, can help local partnerships bolster their own activities by building a connection with other groups to share and learn from one another, providing the latest information and resources to strengthen activities that support these priority areas, and providing recognition for visible commitment.

Afterschool Learning

The Facts

According to the FBI, youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are most at risk of committing violent acts and being victims of crime between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Surveys show that parents want their children to be involved in safe afterschool learning and enrichment activities with opportunities to use technology; to participate in the arts, drama and music; to get extra help with basic academic skills; and to participate in community service.

The Role of Faith Communities

Faith community members can help students take advantage of the afterschool time in a safe and constructive manner by starting or supporting extended learning programs in local schools and communities. By providing these activities and more, faith community partnerships are giving children lots of wholesome activities and helping schools and other facilities stay open before and after school and in the summer as community learning centers. By sponsoring alcohol- and drug-free activities and by providing extracurricular learning activities, mentors, internships with employers, and community service opportunities, faith communities are making a difference for youth in their community.

Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, DC, established a Math and Science Computer Learning Center to teach critical thinking and problem solving skills to children in 4th through 8th grades using math, science, and a computer-based curriculum. The Center is open after school and evenings and is staffed by both paid and volunteer staff. During the daytime, the Center is used for adult skill development in a welfare-to-work program.

What Can Your Faith Community Do to Help Children Learn After School?

Organize and sponsor afterschool, extended learning activities for students of all ages. Your faith community members—and members of your broader partnership—can find out what children are learning at school and reinforce that learning in afterschool activities. By sharing expertise and talents, your group can make it possible for students to participate in the arts, perform appropriate science experiments, help others in the community, or engage in any number of fun learning activities—all in a safe, orderly afterschool environment.

Teach children and their parents about the latest technology and its uses for learning. Your group can coordinate with schools and libraries to use their computer labs for special activities or you can establish your own computer lab by collecting and repairing donated computers and printers.

Host or co-host recognition opportunities. Try sponsoring contests and award ceremonies in the arts, music, math, and reading to help reinforce academic achievement in school and throughout the community. Held in the afterschool hours or early evening, they provide an occasion for children and their families to gather and recognize local achievements.

Support and help coordinate the use of college or high school students interested in teaching. As tutors or homework supervisors, older students can help younger ones with their academic skills. The younger students get the extra help they need, and the older students get valuable experience as they plan their own futures. Provide older students with information about available opportunities for careers in teaching and the steps involved in becoming a teacher.

Publicize the need in your community for safe, fun, afterschool learning activities. Children of all ages, and especially middle school youth who have few options open to them, need safe afterschool activities. Perhaps your faith community is small and cannot provide these activities on your own. Your community can start an awareness campaign by word-of-mouth or by generating publicity to bring together many community groups who will rally around this need.

Help staff members and directors of afterschool programs. Your community may already have a small program for the afterschool hours. Think how much more effective the existing program could be with additional volunteers, more space, new books, and appropriate supplies. By coordinating with existing programs, your faith community can extend its reach and enhance their effectiveness.

U.S. Department of Education Resources on Afterschool Learning

Safe and Smart: Making the Afterschool Hours Work for Kids. This new report from the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice highlights the benefits of afterschool activities and offers evidence of how such programs can make a difference for children. It details key components of high-quality programs and showcases some outstanding models in communities across the nation.

Give Us Wings! Let Us Fly! This brochure provides information about afterschool programs: how afterschool programs can help, where they can be found, examples of programs making a difference, what you can do to help make options available for children in the afterschool hours, and resources for obtaining additional information.

Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School. This guidebook shows the benefits of keeping schools and other community facilities open for children and families beyond traditional operating hours, and it gives practical advice about how to provide access to valuable educational resources in public buildings that are safe for children.

Bringing Education Into the Afterschool Hours. Provides schools with ideas on how they can use their afterschool program in new and effective ways to promote student achievement and meet the needs of their students and

community. Each activity illustrated includes suggestions for additional resources available through the U.S. Department of Education.

> *Publications are free of charge and may be ordered by calling* ***1-877-4ED-PUBS****. They are also found on the Web page for the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education at http://pfie.ed.gov. Further information on afterschool learning can be obtained by calling* ***1-800-USA-LEARN*** *or visiting* ***www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/21stCCLC/index.html****.*

Funding Source: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program funds partnerships of local public schools and community organizations (including faith communities) for providing extended-time learning activities in public school buildings in rural and inner-city areas. The public school or public school district serves as the fiscal agent for the grant. Extended-time learning activities can be held before and after school, on weekends, during school vacations, and in the summer months. The focus of this program is to provide extended learning opportunities for participating children in a safe, drug-free and supervised environment. A priority of the program is to focus on middle school students.

In 1998, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provided nearly $100 million to rural and inner-city public schools to address the educational needs of their communities after school, on weekends, and

during the summer. In 1999, another $100 million in new grants were appropriated for this program.

Currently, about 900 rural and inner-city public schools in nearly 300 communities—in collaboration with other public and non-profit agencies and organizations, local businesses, educational entities, cultural organizations, and faith communities—are now participating as 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Building on this U.S. Department of Education program, the C.S. Mott Foundation is providing up to $55 million for technical assistance and training for afterschool programs in every state.

Faith communities interested in tapping into this source of funding for afterschool and other extended-time learning programs should contact the community relations staff member in their local public school district. As a partner, faith communities can help design the program, assist in hiring staff, provide volunteers and materials to enhance the program, and recruit student participation. Remember that activities by faith communities in this setting must be secular and neutral. Faith community partners should also plan to attend training sessions for potential grantees. For more information, visit www.ed.gov and www.mott.org.

The America Reads Challenge

The Facts

There is a national consensus, based on well-established research, that children should read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Research demonstrates that if students cannot read well by the end of the third grade, their chances for success are significantly diminished, and there is a greater likelihood they will drop out of school later on. Yet, 40 percent of America's fourth graders cannot read at the basic level on challenging national reading assessments. Research shows that parents and other concerned individuals in local communities and the private sector can make a difference as tutors and mentors, extending the reading program of the school. The president has issued the *America Reads Challenge* to get everyone to pitch in and help reach this reading goal.

The Role of Faith Communities

The America Reads Challenge is a call to all Americans—parents, educators, libraries, religious institutions, universities, college students, the media, community and national groups, cultural organizations, business leaders, and senior citizens—to support teachers and to help ensure that every child in America can read well and independently by the end of the third grade.

Reading is a skill that is developed not only in the classroom but also in the home and the community. Your faith community can play an important role in the America Reads Challenge by working with students who need extra help

in learning to read. You can provide resources and encouragement to parents in your congregation, collect children's books to distribute to local families, provide volunteers for an ongoing reading effort in your community, connect to a public library's summer reading program, or begin a weekly reading program in your facility.

> The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church began a summer reading program through Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, using the READ*WRITE*NOW! Program (see p. 37). Reading program volunteers work with children from neighboring public schools during the summer months to provide a fun and enriching reading program. Both volunteers and children agreed—it was a great success! Additionally, the Baltimore area UMC churches joined an existing literacy program to extend the services offered.

What Can Your Faith Community Do to Help Children Learn to Read?

Instill a love of reading in children. By reading aloud to their children regularly and using TV wisely, parents and other adults in your faith community can empower children with the lifelong habit of reading. Holding family reading nights, story hours, and book exchanges can help families make reading a priority.

Encourage reading in your group, schools, and the community. Host a read-in at a local school to kick things off. Coordinating with the school principal, librarian, and reading coordinator, invite parents, police officers, high school and college students, business people, the mayor, and any community

members to bring their favorite children's book to read to a class. Students can read their own favorite books to their classmates and the visiting community members. The talents of faith community members and other local partners can create a wonderful day for children.

Be a volunteer tutor. Members of your faith community can mentor and tutor both children and adults who need extra help with reading. Faith communities can adopt schools and serve as reading tutors to those students. Or, start by hosting programs for members of your own congregation. Spread the news by encouraging participants to bring a friend. If your group is not ready to tackle a project of its own, plan to join an existing group. Many community and civic groups already sponsor tutoring programs and can always use extra volunteers.

Connect parents and tutors with reading experts. Involve experts who can provide parents and tutors with guidance and training on the best way to help children learn to read. Effective reading practices can make the efforts of tutors and the support of parents and family members even more helpful.

Support high standards. Find out about the state and local standards for reading achievement and the results of reading assessments for schools in your community. Join parents, teachers, and school staff in supporting high standards and reward students who reach those high standards.

U.S. Department of Education Resources on Reading

America Reads Challenge Resource Kit. This kit will provide you with everything you need for accepting the challenge of making sure all of America's children learn to read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Topics such as finding and serving children, recruiting and training tutors, forming a community coalition, and reaching out to families and teachers are covered in the kit.

*READ*WRITE*NOW!* Available in both English and Spanish, this is a summer reading program designed to be used by a child pre-school through grade six with a reading partner. The child reads 30 minutes a day, at least five days a week, and meets at least once a week with his or her reading partner. The READ*WRITE*NOW! series includes the basic kit, an early childhood kit (READY*SET*READ!), a learning partners guide, and a new learning poster which contains activities to do together that encourage reading and strengthen skills.

Simple Things You Can Do to Help a Child Read Well and Independently. This booklet provides suggestions for parents, schools, librarians, concerned citizens, community organizations, universities, employers, and members of the media on how to help meet the *America Reads Challenge.*

Checkpoints for Progress for Families and Communities and *Checkpoints for Progress for Teachers and Learning Partners.* These two publications help

to identify what most children can do in reading and writing at different ages and what most children can read by grade level.

Publications are free of charge and may be ordered by calling ***1-877-4ED-PUBS.*** *They are also found on the Web page for the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education at http://pfie.ed.gov. Further information on the America Reads Challenge can be obtained by* calling ***1-800-USA-LEARN*** *or visiting* ***www.ed.gov/inits/americareads.***

Funding Source: The Reading Excellence Program

The Reading Excellence Program, a $260 million federal grant program, awards competitive grants to selected states. States use the funds to improve reading for children in high-poverty schools and schools needing improvement by supporting research-based reading instruction and tutoring. The program's goals are to ensure that children enter school ready to learn and that they quickly learn to read once in school. Participating local schools:

- improve reading instruction for children in grades K-3, especially through professional development of teachers;
- support or coordinate with family literacy activities, including early childhood and parenting education; and
- offer extended learning opportunities such as tutoring or summer programs.

A key feature of the Reading Excellence Program is the requirement that its activities be based on reading research.

Faith communities may participate through partnerships with the local schools that receive Reading Excellence grants from their state. Check the U.S. Department of Education's Reading Excellence Web site to see if your state received a grant. If it did, check with the state contact listed to see which districts and schools are participating. The Web site is at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/REA. You can provide valuable assistance to your community by partnering with your local school and contributing to the effectiveness of the Reading Excellence Program.

Think College Early

The Facts

Today, more than ever before, education is the fault line between those who will prosper in the new economy and those who will not. More and more jobs in the future—particularly those involving technology—require at least some postsecondary education, making the opportunity to go to college more important than ever for American families and their children. Fifteen years ago, the typical college graduate earned 38 percent more than a high school graduate; as of 1995, that advantage had increased to 81 percent.

The Role of Faith Communities

To "think college early" means to plan for the future by getting on track for college in the middle school or junior high years. Taking the right courses, such as algebra and geometry beginning in the 8th and 9th grades, will open the doors to college. As students move on to high school, they prepare to enter and succeed in college by taking college preparatory and Advanced Placement courses and tests that reflect national standards of excellence.

For years, the college-going rate of lower-income students has lagged far behind the rate for students from higher income families. Much of the problem stems from the fact that many lower-income families do not know how to plan for a college education, often because they simply have never done it before.

Faith communities can play an important role in this process. They can echo the high standards that schools and families set for students, encourage them to work hard and earn the best grades they can, connect them with mentors who will help them in their studies, and make sure that students and their families know about financial aid opportunities.

Many United Methodist churches hold annual college fairs in their common areas for local middle, junior high, and high school youth. The fairs feature materials about colleges, application procedures, academic requirements, and financing a college education. These fairs are held in cooperation with the local school system and in partnership with other faith communities and community organizations.

What Can Your Faith Community Do to Help Young People Prepare for College?

Emphasize the importance of working hard in school and of going to college. Almost 90 percent of new jobs being created require more than a high school level of literacy and mathematics skills. Earning a two-year or a four-year college degree makes a difference in lifetime earnings, choices, and opportunities. Your groups can spread the word in the community about the importance of college and lifelong learning.

Host a series of "Think College Early" events for middle, junior high, and high school students. Your group can join forces with school counselors, local colleges and universities, PTAs, religious groups, the Chamber of Commerce, local and state government offices, recent college graduates living in your area, and others to sponsor meetings and activities to get information out to students and their families. Members of your group and other caring adults can invite college officials, faculty members, representatives of groups that sponsor scholarships, or other speakers to attend meetings in order to talk with students and parents about college and what it takes to attend and graduate. Leaders from any field can talk about

the education needed to succeed in their profession, and they can encourage students to visit local college campuses, send away for materials about colleges, and access information about colleges on the Web.

Help middle, junior high, and high school students take the right courses. Students who take challenging mathematics courses, such as algebra in the middle grades, will be ready to continue in a college preparatory or tech-prep curriculum in high school, with courses such as geometry, algebra II, chemistry, physics, and calculus. Your group members can tutor junior high and middle school students in core subjects, such as algebra and geometry, and provide helpful hints for getting through difficult school work.

Organize workshops to help with the college application process. The college application process can be daunting for high school juniors and their parents. Your faith community can organize group sessions pairing new college applicants with "helpers" from the faith community. These volunteers can assist with filling out the college application form, student loan forms, and applications for scholarships. You can also conduct classes to assist students in writing required essays for their applications.

Build a school-college-community partnership to improve student achievement. Your group can help connect area colleges and universities with middle and high schools to help improve student achievement and to encourage students to go on to college.

Launch a mentoring, job-shadowing, and internship program. Started at the beginning of the school year, these programs can be a wonderfully positive experience for students and the adults providing the mentorship. Your group members can serve as role models to students, starting in elementary school, so they receive the special attention needed to develop confidence in their abilities. Members of faith communities come from all walks of life. Your group can organize job-shadowing opportunities for middle school students, allowing them to spend a day in the workplace with a mentor to see the possibilities of different careers. At the high school level, students gain practical workplace skills and a greater understanding of their career options through internships.

U.S. Department of Education Resources on Getting Ready for College

Think College Early Web site. This creative Web site is designed especially for middle school students, their parents, and their teachers. It has special sections on course taking, financial aid, and resources. It is found at www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/dbhome.html.

Database of Early College Awareness Programs. This database of early college awareness programs allows you to find a program, searching by state and by various program characteristics. It is found at the Think College Early site at www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/index.html.

Yes You Can. A guide for establishing mentoring programs to prepare youth for college.

Think College? Me? Now? A handbook to help middle school and junior high school students think about college.

Getting Ready for College Early. A handbook for parents of students in middle school and junior high school about courses necessary for attending college and how to finance a college education. This handbook is available in both English and Spanish.

> *Publications are free of charge and may be ordered by calling* ***1-877-4ED-PUBS.*** *They are also found on the Web page for the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education at http://pfie.ed.gov. Further information on Think College Early can be obtained by calling* ***1-800-USA-LEARN*** *or visiting www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/early.*

Funding Source: GEAR UP

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a new national initiative to encourage more young people to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard and take the right courses to go to college. The initiative awards multi-year grants to states and to locally designed partnerships between colleges and universities and low-income

middle schools, plus at least two other partners—such as community organizations, religious groups, businesses, parent groups, and non-profits.

Partnerships are designed to use the following proven strategies:

- Informing students and parents about college options and financial aid;
- Promoting rigorous academic coursework;
- Working with a whole grade-level of students in order to raise expectations for all students; and
- Starting with 6th- or 7th- grade students and continuing through high school graduation.

If your faith community is interested in helping to sponsor a GEAR UP program during the next funding cycle, or if you would like to find out if a GEAR UP program is currently being planned, contact your local public school district office or a local college or university, particularly one with a school of education. Further information can be obtained by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN or by visiting www.ed.gov/gearup.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

The Facts

Recent tragedies experienced by the communities of Littleton, Colorado, Springfield, Oregon, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and others have profoundly shocked and grieved the nation. Yet, it is important to remember that 90

percent of our schools are free of serious, violent crime. But much remains to be done to make our public schools even safer and to provide for the safety of our children in their homes, their communities, and in their passage to and from school.

The Role of Faith Communities

Our young people may dress differently and may have different musical tastes than their parents and other adults. But this is an ambitious and striving generation of young people. In this time of concern and even some fear, we must send our young people a powerful message of hope and security. To do this, we can assist parents in slowing down their lives, help them to tune into their children and their needs, and support both young people and parents during the difficult teenage years. We can also help youth make connections and have a stake in their community.

> Youth and Police in Partnership is sponsored in Boston, Massachusetts, by the United Methodist Church Urban Services. It supports neighborhood-based youth initiatives in problem solving, public safety, and trust building. The goal is to bring the resources of the religious community and its members to bear on inner-city problems. The goal is being achieved through collaborations between successful adults, youth, police and other agencies. Youth and police work together, using a problem-solving methodology, to make their respective neighborhoods safe, clean, attractive, and productive.

Additionally, faith communities can take an active role in helping our young people take responsibility and assume leadership roles among their peers.

By bringing out the best in our young people and challenging them to bring out the best in others, we can make a real difference in our communities.

The National Conference on Community and Justice in the Tampa Bay region operates *Camp Anytown*. The purpose of *Camp Anytown* is to foster understanding and cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds. Students exposed to this multicultural experience become better prepared to assume roles of leadership in our society. *Camp Anytown* is sponsored in cooperation with the school systems of the area. After attending *Camp Anytown*, students organize multicultural clubs in their own school and participate in monthly follow-up meetings.

Faith communities can also provide guidance, academic support, and supervision during the summer months when children are not in school and their families are at work.

More than 100 children from Caguas, Puerto Rico, participated in a summer program sponsored by Para una Communidad y Escuela Segura y Libre de Drogas. These children are all below the poverty line and many live in challenging home situations. The children participated in summer camp activities, academic enrichment programs, and field trips. At the end of the summer, assessment results indicated that 94 percent of the children learned to do new things and found new ways to solve problems. Ninety percent "liked themselves better" because they were respected and 96 percent reporting making new friends.

What Can Your Faith Community Do to Provide a Safe and Healthy Environment?

Talk and listen. Your group members can talk with children and encourage parents to talk with their children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Started in the earliest years and extended throughout adulthood, these conversations could save lives.

Provide wholesome activities. Be available to help keep schools open after school and in the summer as community learning centers. Sponsor alcohol- and drug-free activities and dances. Provide extracurricular activities such as sports, art, band, special interest clubs, and field trips. Provide mentors, internships with employers, and community service opportunities.

Regularly bring together children, youth, parents, and other caring adults. Your group can regularly involve parents and other caring adults, including law enforcement officials, in the lives of children and youth through mentoring and tutoring programs and through special events that bring together adults and young people.

Make an impact in the schools. Your faith community, working in concert with school officials, teachers, and parents, can make schools more personalized by encouraging regular communication among students, parents, and teachers and finding ways for everyone to meet and get to know others in their school community. You can also provide drug and violence prevention and character education programs to students—provided, of course, that

these programs are secular in nature and religiously neutral. You can help coordinate lectures to schools from federal, state, and local safety agencies to help train teachers to prevent problems and deal with violence.

U.S. Department of Education Resources

Protecting Students From Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools. This guide defines and describes harassment and hate crimes, contains information about applicable laws, details specific positive steps that schools can take to prevent and respond to harassment, includes sample policies and procedures used by school districts in the United States, and identifies many of the resource materials available.

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide for Safe Schools. Central to this guide are the key insights that keeping children safe is a community-wide effort and that effective schools create environments where children and young people truly feel connected. It is part of an overall effort to make sure that every school in this nation has a comprehensive violence prevention plan in place.

Creating Safe Schools: A Resource Collection for Planning and Action. This kit provides resources for creating a safe school environment. It includes articles on gangs, violence, victimization, and bullying as well as suggestions on how to prevent or stop these problems.

Satellite Town Meeting # 54 [English VHS] "Back to School: Safe and Sound." Video of a live, interactive teleconference where renowned experts, local educators, and community leaders share ideas on how to improve schools. This Satellite Town Meeting focuses on going back to school and making schools safe. It offers an opportunity for discussion with people in your community who share a commitment to building partnerships and a common vision of educational excellence for all children.

Publications are free of charge and may be ordered by calling ***1-877-4ED-PUBS.*** *Further information on Safe and Drug-Free Schools can be obtained by calling* ***1-800-USA-LEARN*** *or visiting* ***www.ed.gov/pubs/index.html.***

Funding Source: Safe Start Initiative

The purpose of Safe Start (Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) is to demonstrate how to prevent and reduce the impact of family and community violence on young children (primarily from birth to 6 years of age). The project seeks to create a comprehensive service delivery system by helping communities to expand existing partnerships among service providers in the fields of early childhood education and development, health, mental health, family support and strengthening, domestic violence, substance abuse prevention and treatment, crisis intervention, child welfare, law enforcement, and court and legal services.

Safe Start demonstration project grants are awarded to broad-based partnerships that include, among other partners, faith leaders and communities. For further information on the Safe Start initiative, visit www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/grants/safestart.html.

Funding Source: Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

The Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services are collaborating to provide students with comprehensive educational, mental health, law enforcement and, as appropriate, juvenile justice system services and activities. This effort is designed to ensure that students develop the social skills and emotional resilience necessary to avoid drug use and violent behavior and to help create safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. With this grant, schools and communities should be able to enhance and implement comprehensive community-wide strategies.

Awards are made to school districts in partnership with a broad base of community organizations. Faith communities interested in learning more about the grant or joining in a local partnership application can consult the Notice of Intent to Make Funds Available at www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/1999-1/020599a.html or call the school safety office in their local public school district to ask if they have applied or intend to apply in the next grant cycle. By being

involved in the beginning stages of designing the grant application and offering to help support its implementation, you will be in a position to better involve students and parents in your faith community and wider local area.

Resources and References

In this section, you will find the following resources to help your faith community be successful as it moves forward in making a difference for America's children:

- Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles
- Religious Expression in Public Schools
- The Equal Access Act
- Organizations That Can Answer Questions on Religious Expression in Public Schools
- Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, Partner Registration
- Planning a Religious and Education Summit

Religious Expression in Public Schools:

A Statement of Principles

"...Schools do more than train children's minds. They also help to nurture their souls by reinforcing the values they learn at home and in their communities. I believe that one of the best ways we can help out schools to do this is by supporting students' rights to voluntarily practice their religious beliefs, including prayer in schools.... For more than 200 years, the First Amendment has protected our religious freedom and allowed many faiths to flourish in our homes, in our work place and in our schools. Clearly understood and sensibly applied, it works."

President Clinton
May 30, 1998

A Letter from the U.S. Secretary of Education

Dear American Educator,

Almost three years ago, President Clinton directed me, as U.S. Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Attorney General, to provide every public school district in America with a statement of principles addressing the extent to which religious expression and activity are permitted in our public schools. In accordance with the President's directive, I sent every school superintendent in the country guidelines on *Religious Expression in Public Schools* in August of 1995.

The purpose of promulgating these presidential guidelines was to end much of the confusion regarding religious expression in our nation's public schools that had developed over more than thirty years since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1962 regarding state sponsored school prayer. I believe that these guidelines have helped school officials, teachers, students and parents find a new common ground on the important issue of religious freedom consistent with constitutional requirements.

In July of 1996, for example, the Saint Louis School Board adopted a district wide policy using these guidelines. While the school district had previously allowed certain religious activities, it had never spelled them out before, resulting in a lawsuit over the right of a student to pray before lunch in the cafeteria. The creation of a clearly defined policy using the guidelines allowed the school board and the family of the student to arrive at a mutually satisfactory settlement.

In a case decided last year in a United States District Court in Alabama, *(Chandler v. James)* involving student initiated prayer at school related events, the court instructed the DeKalb County School District to maintain for circulation in the library of each school a copy of the presidential guidelines.

The great advantage of the presidential guidelines, however, is that they allow school districts to avoid contentious disputes by developing a common understanding among students, teachers, parents and the broader community that the First Amendment does in fact provide ample room for religious expression by students while at the same time maintaining freedom from government sponsored religion.

The development and use of these presidential guidelines were not and are not isolated activities. Rather, these guidelines are part of an ongoing and growing effort by educators and America's religious community to find a new common ground. In April of 1995, for example, thirty-five religious groups issued "Religion in the Public Schools: A Joint Statement of Current Law" that the Department drew from in developing its own guidelines. Following the release of the presidential guidelines, the National PTA and the Freedom Forum jointly published in 1996 "A Parent's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools" which put the guidelines into an easily understandable question and answer format.

In the last two years, I have held three religious-education summits to inform faith communities and educators about the guidelines and to encourage continued dialogue and cooperation within constitutional limits. Many religious communities have contacted local schools and school systems to offer their assistance because of the clarity provided by the guidelines. The United Methodist Church has provided reading tutors to many schools, and Hadassah and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism have both been extremely active in providing local schools with support for summer reading programs.

The guidelines we are releasing today are the same as originally issued in 1995, except that changes have been made in the sections on religious excusals and student garb to reflect the Supreme Court decision in *Boerne v. Flores* declaring the Religious Freedom Restoration Act unconstitutional as applied to actions of state and local governments.

These guidelines continue to reflect two basic and equally important obligations imposed on public school officials by the First Amendment. First, schools may not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs solely because they are of a religious nature. Schools may not discriminate against private religious expression by students, but must instead give students the same right to engage in religious activity and discussion as they have to engage in other comparable activity. Generally, this means that students may pray in a nondisruptive manner during the school day when they are not engaged in school activities and instruction, subject to the same rules of order that apply to other student speech.

At the same time, schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity. Among other things, of course, school administrators and teachers may not organize or encourage prayer exercises in the classroom. Teachers, coaches and other school officials who act as advisors to student groups must remain mindful that they cannot engage in or lead the religious activities of students.

And the right of religious expression in school does not include the right to have a "captive audience" listen, or to compel other students to participate. School officials should not permit student religious speech to turn into religious harassment aimed at a

student or a small group of students. Students do not have the right to make repeated invitations to other students to participate in religious activity in the face of a request to stop.

The statement of principles set forth below derives from the First Amendment. Implementation of these principles, of course, will depend on specific factual contexts and will require careful consideration in particular cases.

In issuing these revised guidelines I encourage every school district to make sure that principals, teachers, students and parents are familiar with their content. To that end I offer three suggestions:

First, school districts should use these guidelines to revise or develop their own district wide policy regarding religious expression. In developing such a policy, school officials can engage parents, teachers, the various faith communities and the broader community in a positive dialogue to define a common ground that gives all parties the assurance that when questions do arise regarding religious expression the community is well prepared to apply these guidelines to specific cases. The Davis County School District in Farmington, Utah,is an example of a school district that has taken the affirmative step of developing such a policy.

At a time of increasing religious diversity in our country such a proactive step can help school districts create a framework of civility that reaffirms and strengthens the community consensus regarding religious liberty. School districts that do not make the effort to develop their own policy may find themselves unprepared for the intensity of the debate that can engage a community when positions harden around a live controversy involving religious expression in public schools.

Second, I encourage principals and administrators to take the additional step of making sure that teachers, so often on the front line of any dispute regarding religious expression, are fully informed about the guidelines. The Gwinnett County School system in Georgia, for example, begins every school year with workshops for teachers that include the distribution of these presidential guidelines. Our nation's schools of education can also do their part by ensuring that prospective teachers are knowledgeable about religious expression in the classroom.

Third, I encourage schools to actively take steps to inform parents and students about religious expression in school using these guidelines. The Carter County School District in Elizabethton, Tennessee, included the subject of religious expression in a character education program that it developed in the fall of 1997. This effort included sending home to every parent a copy of the "Parent's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools."

Help is available for those school districts that seek to develop policies on religious expression. I have enclosed a list of associations and groups that can provide information to school districts and parents who seek to learn more about religious expression in our nation's public schools.

In addition, citizens can turn to the U.S. Department of Education web site *(http://www.ed.gov)* for information about the guidelines and other activities of the Department that support the growing effort of educators and religious communities to support the education of our nation's children.

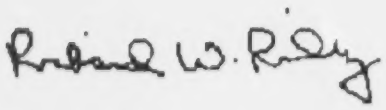
Finally, I encourage teachers and principals to see the First Amendment as something more than a piece of dry, old parchment locked away in the national attic gathering dust. It is a vital living principle, a call to action, and a demand that each generation reaffirm its connection to the basic idea that is America -- that we are a free people who protect our freedoms by respecting the freedom of others who differ from us.

Our history as a nation reflects the history of the Puritan, the Quaker, the Baptist, the Catholic, the Jew and many others fleeing persecution to find religious freedom in America. The United States remains the most successful experiment in religious freedom that the world has ever known because the First Amendment uniquely balances freedom of private religious belief and expression with freedom from state-imposed religious expression.

Public schools can neither foster religion nor preclude it. Our public schools must treat religion with fairness and respect and vigorously protect religious expression as well as the freedom of conscience of all other students. In so doing our public schools reaffirm the First Amendment and enrich the lives of their students.

I encourage you to share this information widely and in the most appropriate manner with your school community. Please accept my sincere thanks for your continuing work on behalf of all of America's children.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student prayer and religious discussion: The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment does not prohibit purely private religious speech by students. Students therefore have the same right to engage in individual or group prayer and religious discussion during the school day as they do to engage in other comparable activity. For example, students may read their Bibles or other scriptures, say grace before meals, and pray before tests to the same extent they may engage in comparable nondisruptive activities. Local school authorities possess substantial discretion to impose rules of order and other pedagogical restrictions on student activities, but they may not structure or administer such rules to discriminate against religious activity or speech.

Generally, students may pray in a nondisruptive manner when not engaged in school activities or instruction, and subject to the rules that normally pertain in the applicable setting. Specifically, students in informal settings, such as cafeterias and hallways, may pray and discuss their religious views with each other, subject to the same rules of order as apply to other student activities and speech. Students may also speak to, and attempt to persuade, their peers about religious topics just as they do with regard to political topics. School officials, however, should intercede to stop student speech that constitutes harassment aimed at a student or a group of students.

Students may also participate in before or after school events with religious content, such as "see you at the flag pole" gatherings, on the same terms as they may participate in other noncurriculum activities on school premises. School officials may neither discourage nor encourage participation in such an event.

The right to engage in voluntary prayer or religious discussion free from discrimination does not include the right to have a captive audience listen, or to compel other students to participate. Teachers and school administrators should ensure that no student is in any way coerced to participate in religious activity.

Graduation prayer and baccalaureates: Under current Supreme Court decisions, school officials may not mandate or organize prayer at graduation, nor organize religious baccalaureate ceremonies. If a school generally opens its facilities to private groups, it must make its facilities available on the same terms to organizers of privately sponsored religious baccalaureate services. A school may not extend preferential treatment to baccalaureate ceremonies and may in some instances be obliged to disclaim official endorsement of such ceremonies.

Official neutrality regarding religious activity: Teachers and school administrators, when acting in those capacities, are representatives of the state and are prohibited by the establishment clause from soliciting or encouraging religious activity, and from participating in such activity with students. Teachers and administrators also are prohibited from discouraging activity because of its religious content, and from soliciting or encouraging antireligious activity.

Teaching about religion: Public schools may not provide religious instruction, but they may teach **about** religion, including the Bible or other scripture: the history of religion, comparative religion, the Bible (or other scripture)-as-literature, and the role of religion in

the history of the United States and other countries all are permissible public school subjects. Similarly, it is permissible to consider religious influences on art, music, literature, and social studies. Although public schools may teach about religious holidays, including their religious aspects, and may celebrate the secular aspects of holidays, schools may not observe holidays as religious events or promote such observance by students.

Student assignments: Students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.

Religious literature: Students have a right to distribute religious literature to their schoolmates on the same terms as they are permitted to distribute other literature that is unrelated to school curriculum or activities. Schools may impose the same reasonable time, place, and manner or other constitutional restrictions on distribution of religious literature as they do on nonschool literature generally, but they may not single out religious literature for special regulation.

Religious excusals: Subject to applicable State laws, schools enjoy substantial discretion to excuse individual students from lessons that are objectionable to the student or the students' parents on religious or other conscientious grounds. However, students generally do not have a Federal right to be excused from lessons that may be inconsistent with their religious beliefs or practices. School officials may neither encourage nor discourage students from availing themselves of an excusal option.

Released time: Subject to applicable State laws, schools have the discretion to dismiss students to off-premises religious instruction, provided that schools do not encourage or discourage participation or penalize those who do not attend. Schools may not allow religious instruction by outsiders on school premises during the school day.

Teaching values: Though schools must be neutral with respect to religion, they may play an active role with respect to teaching civic values and virtue, and the moral code that holds us together as a community. The fact that some of these values are held also by religions does not make it unlawful to teach them in school.

Student garb: Schools enjoy substantial discretion in adopting policies relating to student dress and school uniforms. Students generally have no Federal right to be exempted from religiously-neutral and generally applicable school dress rules based on their religious beliefs or practices; however, schools may not single out religious attire in general, or attire of a particular religion, for prohibition or regulation. Students may display religious messages on items of clothing to the same extent that they are permitted to display other comparable messages. Religious messages may not be singled out for suppression, but rather are subject to the same rules as generally apply to comparable messages.

THE EQUAL ACCESS ACT

The Equal Access Act is designed to ensure that, consistent with the First Amendment, student religious activities are accorded the same access to public school facilities as are student secular activities. Based on decisions of the Federal courts, as well as its interpretations of the Act, the Department of Justice has advised that the Act should be interpreted as providing, among other things, that:

General provisions: Student religious groups at public secondary schools have the same right of access to school facilities as is enjoyed by other comparable student groups. Under the Equal Access Act, a school receiving Federal funds that allows one or more student noncurriculum-related clubs to meet on its premises during noninstructional time may not refuse access to student religious groups.

Prayer services and worship exercises covered: A meeting, as defined and protected by the Equal Access Act, may include a prayer service, Bible reading, or other worship exercise.

Equal access to means of publicizing meetings: A school receiving Federal funds must allow student groups meeting under the Act to use the school media -- including the public address system, the school newspaper, and the school bulletin board -- to announce their meetings on the same terms as other noncurriculum-related student groups are allowed to use the school media. Any policy concerning the use of school media must be applied to all noncurriculum-related student groups in a nondiscriminatory matter. Schools, however, may inform students that certain groups are not school sponsored.

Lunch-time and recess covered: A school creates a limited open forum under the Equal Access Act, triggering equal access rights for religious groups, when it allows students to meet during their lunch periods or other noninstructional time during the school day, as well as when it allows students to meet before and after the school day.

Revised May 1998

List of Organizations That Can Answer Questions on Religious Expression in Public Schools

American Association of School Administrators

Contact: Kelly Taylor
1801 N. Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (703) 528-0700 *Fax:* (703) 528-2146
E-Mail: ktaylor@aasa.org *Web site:* http://www.aasa.org

American Jewish Congress

Contact: Marc Stern
15 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
Phone: (212) 360-1545 *Fax:* (212) 861-7056
E-Mail: stern@ajcongress.org

Christian Legal Society

Contact: Center for Law and Religious Freedom
4208 Evergreen Lane, #222
Annandale, VA 22003
Phone: (703) 642-1070 *Fax:* (703) 642-1075
E-Mail: clrf@clsnet.org *Web site:* http://www.clsnet.com

Freedom Forum

Contact: First Amendment Center
1101 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (703) 528-0800 *Fax:* (703) 284-2879
E-Mail: chaynes@freedomforum.org *Web site:* http://www.freedomforum.org

National Association of Evangelicals

Contact: Forest Montgomery
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, #522
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 789-1011 *Fax:* (202) 842-0392
E-Mail: oga@nae.net *Web site:* http://www.nae.net

National PTA

Contact: Maribeth Oakes
1090 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 289-6790 *Fax:* (202) 289-6791
E-Mail: m_oakes@pta.org *Web site:* http://www.pta.org

National School Boards Association

Contact: Reginald Felton
680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 838-6782 *Fax:* (703) 548-5613
E-Mail: rfelton@nsba.org *Web site:* http://www.nsba.org

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Contact: Rabbi David Saperstein
2027 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 387-2800 *Fax:* (202) 667-9070
E-Mail: rac@uahc.org *Web site:* http://rj.org/RAC/

PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Partner Registration

To register and receive your Partnership Promise Certificate, enter the information requested. Mail to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133.

The registration must include a contact person and phone number in order to be processed. The information you provide may be made available by the U.S. Department of Education on the web, and, in any event, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and will be made available to requestors upon request.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning.

Name of Partner group or school

Address line 1

Address line 2

City | State | Zip

Telephone | Fax

URL

Contact Information

Head of Organization

Contact Person

Email

Is your organization a(n) (Please check one.)

Family-School Partner
Community Organization
Religious Group
Employer for Learning

OMB Number: 1860-0505 Expiration Date: 10/31/2001

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0505. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

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✷ As a **Family-School Partner**, our school will be welcoming to families; offer challenging courses; create safe and drug-free learning environments; organize tutoring and other opportunities to improve student learning; and support the inclusion of families in the school decision-making process.

Our families will monitor student attendance, homework completion and television watching; take time with and listen to their children; become acquainted with teachers, administrators and the school staff; read with younger children and share a good book with a teen; volunteer in school when possible; and participate in the school decision-making process. ***We pledge to–***

- Share responsibility at school and at home to give students a better education and a good start in life.
- Promote effective two-way communication between families and schools, by schools reducing educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families staying in touch with the school.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn how to help their children succeed in school and for the school staff members to work with families.
- Support family-school efforts to improve student learning by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

✷ As **Employers for Learning Partner**, we recognize that a strong and vigorous economy, for our business and our nation, depends upon educated, skilled, and competent citizenry. Today's students are tomorrow's citizens and our long-term investments for the future. ***We pledge to–***

- Identify a contact person, authorized to explore and develop options for company involvement in our family-school-community initiatives.
- Take action to implement programs.
- Share best practices after evaluating programs annually.
- Form partnerships to promote, implement, and improve family-friendly policies and practices.

✷ As a **Community-based Organization Partner**, we support family-school compacts and affirm the importance of family-community involvement in students learning. ***We pledge to–***

- Make safe schools/safe neighborhoods a priority.
- Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence in an around schools and neighborhoods.
- Reinforce parenting skills using community institutions to provide family and literacy training and referral services.
- Provide mentoring and homework help programs so that children may be assured of tutoring and guidance from knowledgeable and responsible adults.
- Come together to coordinate delivery of services and to eliminate duplication efforts.
- Help develop and sponsor affordable and quality learning, cultural and recreational activities after school, on weekends and during the summer.
- Support schools improvement efforts in the local community.
- Support and become informed about school governance issues.
- Encourage schools to be involved ion the life of the community, through co-sponsorship of community outreach activities of partner organizations.

✷ As a **Religious Communities Partner**, we affirm the vital and enduring role of families in the education of children. We have always regarded families—and parents in particular—as the primary teachers of children, Encouraged by Secretary of Education Richard Riley's concern for all children and his commitment to the role of families in educating children, we call upon all people of good will to stand as one with us in support of families' participation in children's learning.

Planning a Religion and Education Summit

Form a committee that will represent the attendance that you want to have at your summit. Make it broad based in the religious community, include public and private school leaders, and expand it to include community organizations, employers, and government, as appropriate, for your location. Define the geographic area you want to involve and be sure your committee is representative of it as well. Finally, choose committee members who will ensure follow-up to the activities begun at the summit.

Once a committee is in place, you can begin the work of planning the summit. It is recommended that you allow 5-6 months for planning and carrying out the preliminary activities of the summit. Be sure to assign the completion of each task listed below (and others your local committee identifies) to a member of your committee, unless it is an action that requires the joint agreement of the committee.

Timeline

Month 1:

1. Choose the date and site for the summit. Ensure that your site can accommodate the size and anticipated agenda.
2. Discuss and determine key issues and themes for the summit.
3. Determine the agenda: keynote, break out sessions, other activities.
4. Secure a keynote speaker.

Month 2:

1. Invitations to participants:

- decide who will be invited
- get mailing labels from key organizations, committee members and others
- determine the enclosures
- write the letter of invitation and design the registration form; be sure to include on the registration form any information you will later want to document, for example, affiliation, contact information (particularly new e-mail addresses)

2. Breakout sessions

- determine which programs and themes to highlight

- invite presenters
- coordinate audiovisual needs of the speakers
- make arrangements for travel and lodging for speakers, if appropriate
- determine session facilitators and note takers, if appropriate

Month 3:

1. Food
   - determine needs for registration, lunch, breaks, dinner
   - determine costs
   - determine how costs will be covered
   - raise funds (if necessary) to cover costs
2. Logistics
   - secure appropriate rooms for large and breakout meetings
   - arrange for signage to be used on day of conference

Month 4:

1. Plan press
   - pre-conference notice
   - day of conference press
   - follow-up stories on results
2. Plan exhibit space, if desired
   - solicit exhibits
   - arrange for receipt of shipped materials
   - arrange for exhibitors to return materials to their organization
3. Complete mailing
   - send mailing out
   - receive RSVPs (ongoing)
   - maintain RSVP list (ongoing)

Month 5:

1. Plan handouts for summit
   - request materials from the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the U.S. Department of Education
   - request materials from partners, schools, community organizations, and other groups that reflect your summit goals and can impact on their achievement

2. Ensure that meeting rooms can accommodate speakers' audiovisual needs and size of attendance expected.

Two weeks before:

1. Check arrangements for transportation and lodging for speakers.
2. Double-check all other previous arrangements.
3. Test sound system, especially for general session.

One week before:

1. Print list of participants from RSVPs already received.
2. Print program, including rooms and times for breakout sessions.
3. Prepare materials for distribution to participants.

Day of the summit:

1. Set up a registration desk and tables for handouts.
2. Put up signage to help those unfamiliar with the physical location find breakout sessions, rest rooms, lunch, help desk and the like.
3. Staff a help desk with personnel familiar with the summit and physical location.
4. SMILE: Your efforts have paid off!

Following the summit:

1. Reconvene the committee and plan the next steps, based on the results of the summit.
2. Send an article and photos of the summit to Partnership for Family Involvement in Education for featuring in PFIE publications and outreach.

Worksheet 1: Create or Highlight an Education Culture

DOES YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY HAVE THE FOLLOWING:	IF NOT, WHAT COULD BE DONE?
Policy statement expressing your community's commitment to education issues	
Communication strategies designed to indicate the importance of family involvement in education.	
Recognition of those members who are involved in education (for example, teachers, administrators, tutors, volunteers).	
Workshops about the importance of family involvement in education.	
Opportunities for members to support education.	
Information about different ways families can become involved in supporting children's learning.	
Training for parents (for example, how to help children with their homework, how to be an effective mentor).	
Means to distribute information about family involvement.	

Worksheet 2: Assess Resources and Capacity for Providing Them

Capacity for…	For this Purpose…	Current Status	Obstacles/Barriers	Solutions
Physical plant	Establishing afterschool tutoring programs	Usable area could be made available during these hours.	Used for pre-school each weekday morning.	Recruit volunteers to help move aside pre-school materials daily.
Volunteers				
Equipment				
Materials				
Transportation				
Other				

Worksheet 3: Select Community/School Partners

	Possible Answers
With which educational systems (individual schools, local districts, state education agency) would you like to work?	
How would you describe the school(s), local district(s), and the community?	
What unique talents do potential partners have to offer as a community partner (for example, members who are bankers, scientists, teachers, police officers)?	
What do they have to offer (resources, time, people)?	
What are your current education activities? How are they connected to the school system?	
What steps can be taken to identify or expand your current school partnerships?	

Worksheet 4: Recruit and Organize Education, Business, Family, and Community Partners

Identify and Recruit Partners	Recruitment Strategies	Group/Individual	Contact Information	Contact Address	Person Who Will Contact
Education					
Family					
Business					
Community					
Other faith communities					

Worksheet 5: Create a Vision for the Partnership

Potential Priority Areas	Rank Priority for Each Partner	Goals	Consensus Ranking of Priorities
Afterschool Learning			
America Reads Challenge			
Think College Early			
Safe and Drug-Free Schools			
Family Involvement			
Other			

Partnership Vision/Statement of Purpose:

Worksheet 6: Take Stock Based on Partnership Vision

Potential Priority Areas	Alignment of Partners' Priorities with Education Goals	Where Are You Now? (Assessment)	Current Approaches Used to Achieve Goals	Level(s) of Success
Afterschool Learning				
America Reads Challenge				
Think College Early				
Safe and Drug-Free Schools				
Family Involvement				
Other				

Worksheet 7: Set Up a Steering Committee to Guide and Monitor the Partnership

Steering Committee Members	Title/Affiliation	Address	Phone/Fax	E-Mail	Priority Interests
Education					
Business					
Family					
Community					
Other faith communities					

Worksheet 8: Collaboratively Set and Prioritize Short- and Long-Term Objectives

Priority Area Goals	Short-term Objectives (define time)	Long-term Objectives (define time)
Afterschool Learning	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
America Reads Challenge	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Think College Early	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Safe and Drug-Free Schools	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Family Involvement	Customer(s):	Customer(s):
Other	Customer(s):	Customer(s):

Worksheet 9: Create Action Plans and Teams Organized Around Priorities (Duplicate for each priority area)

Action Committees*	Members (contact information)	Committee Objectives	Tasks/ Activities Assigned	Completion Time Frame	Resources Requested	Resources Available	Resources Needed
Operations							
Development							
Communication							
Program Evaluation							
Other							

**Operations = managing daily tasks, managing resources, and monitoring quality; development = recruiting partners, recruiting resources, allocating resources; communication = marketing and public relations, outreach, and networking; program evaluation = monitoring, evaluation, data analysis, reporting, and decision making.*

Worksheet 10: Implement Action Plans (Duplicate for each priority area)

Action Committee Objectives	Activities/ Tasks	*Level of Involvement	Expected Completion	Actual Completion	Resources Allocated	Activities Accom-plished	Comments
Operations							
Development							
Communication							
Evaluation							
Other							

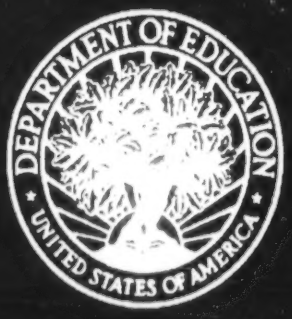
** Levels of involvement: Low=supplemental; medium=programmatic; high=strategic/systemic*

Worksheet 11: Measure and Report Progress (Duplicate for each priority area)

Short-term Objectives By Priority	Baseline Measures	Outcomes Achieved Month/year	Check Points	Next Steps	Outcomes Achieved Month/year	Check Points	Next Steps
			Within budget ___y ___n On schedule? ___y ___n Communica- tion: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Content d) Audiences Sufficient resources? ___y ___n Outcome measures: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Target groups d) Focus Partnership Quality: a) Participation b) Commitment c) Operation(s) d) Challenges			Within budget ___y ___n On schedule? ___y ___n Communica- tion: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Content d) Audiences Sufficient resources? ___y ___n Outcome measures: a) Kind b) Frequency c) Target groups d) Focus Partnership Quality: a) Participation b) Commitment c) Operation(s) d) Challenges	

Worksheet 12: Review Annual Results and Plan for the Future (Duplicate for each priority area)

Objectives	Measurement Tools	Annual Outcomes	Next Steps	Committee Contact
Priority Area			1. Partnership Management --Changes 2. Objectives --Change --Eliminate --Extend --Benchmarking 3. Resources/Budget --Recruitment --Allocation 4. Activities --Improve --Extend --Eliminate 5. Overall program --Revisions --Maintenance --Expansion	



PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173

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